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SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE:

HIS

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

THE RELATION
OF
PHILOSOPHY TO THEOLOGY,
AND OF
THEOLOGY TO RELIGION.

REPRINTED FROM
"THE ECLECTIC REVIEW," JANUARY, 1851.

Revised and Extended.

Colveridge, Samuel Taylor.

"Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day, and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

IN MEMORIAM.

LONDON :
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS essay, which appeared in the January number of the ECLECTIC REVIEW, under the title of "Samuel Taylor Coleridge: his Philosophy and Theology," has been corrected, and extended by the insertion of several passages, marked for extraction from the writings of that author, but omitted for want of space; and it is republished in a separate form in the hope of promoting more widely the knowledge of the value of Coleridge's works, as a preliminary discipline to theological study.

The works referred to in it are;—

Aids to Reflection; 2 vols. 1848.

The Friend; 3 vols. 1850.

Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit; 1849.

Biographia Literaria; 2 vols. 1847.

Literary Remains; 4 vols. 1836—1839.

All published by Pickering; and the following published by Griffin:—

General Introduction to the Encyclopædia Metropolitana;
or a Preliminary Treatise on Method.

Two other works were contained in the list at the head of the Article, both published by Pickering;—

Essays on his own Times; 3 vols. and

Notes and Lectures upon Shakspeare; 2 vols.

And of these, which could not be referred to in connexion with the theme of the Article, a P. S. said:—

‘The “Notes and Lectures upon Shakspeare, and some of the old Poets and Dramatists,” is a republication, in a more commodious and cheaper form, of the substance of the first two volumes of Coleridge’s “Literary Remains,” which have been long out of print. They will be welcomed by all who know the value of the criticisms and critical principles of our philosopher; and to all who desire to become acquainted with those glories of our national literature, we can heartily recommend them, as containing some of the very best helps that are to be found in our language. There are other “literary remains” included in these volumes, some of which have not before appeared in any collection of our author’s writings, which greatly increase their worth. The “Essays on his own Times” are a reprint of Coleridge’s contributions to political journals, commencing with the papers published in his own “Watchman,” the story of which he has told with such effect in his “Biographia Literaria.” They are said to form “a second series of the Friend,” and they are not unworthy of ranking with that work. But they have an independent value from their relation to the eventful period in which they were written. And, whether we agree with the writer’s politics or not, now that the personal feelings which were associated with the movements of those days have died out, we can profitably avail ourselves of them as *mémoires pour servir*, in constructing, for our own satisfaction, some outline of the history of the first fifteen years of this century. Added to this is the biographical interest they possess, for they afford as clear an explanation of the process of change which Coleridge’s political views underwent, as his other writings do respecting his religious opinions; and for such a man, these “Remains” are the best and truest account of his life that could be given to the world.’

London, January, 1851.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE:

HIS

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

ALL human things are subject to one absolutely universal law—that of *change*. Religion itself, the highest of the affairs of man, is not exempted from its operation. There are various proofs that this is the fact; thus, in our personal religious experience we begin by trusting in Jesus as the Saviour of sinners, and thence advance to child-like confidence towards God in Him, and, beyond this, by Him attain to that state, which apostles have described as Christ living in us, the participation of the Divine nature, being children of God. The accuracy with which the “Pilgrim’s Progress” depicts the soul’s life of a Christian, and the help which it has ever afforded to its development, would alone be sufficient to show that in this aspect religion is subject to change. The comparison of the manifestations of the religious life in different ages,—as, for example, that of patriarchs with that of prophets, and the psalmists’ with the apostles’,—conducts us to the same conclusion. But it is much more evident in the intellectual aspect of religion; and the whole history of doctrines is one continuous and incontrovertible proof of this extent of the reign of mutability.

For the want of attention to such considerations, the opinion has become widely prevalent, that Christianity, unlike all else that concerns man, is immutable. With many this opinion has sprung from the *feeling* that religion has to do with eternal truths, and must therefore, like them, be unchangeable. But with others the source is very different. All who have adopted as their formula of faith the creed or system of any Church or theologian of former days, are obliged to hold that, whatever modifications the expression of gospel truth may have been subject to before the date of their formula, it can know none after it. They are obliged to hold this, or else to renounce for their creed that which has most especially recommended it for their adoption. And they who have embraced the philosophy of the day as a religion, are also obliged to maintain the unchangeableness of Christianity, or they would not be able to boast of the superiority of their invention to it, in its fitness for men of the present age.

This opinion widely prevails ; and meanwhile, on every side in society are indications of the imminence of a great change both in the intellectual and vital aspects of the gospel, commencing, most probably, in the former, but assuredly extending to and terminating in the latter. Works of every variety of calibre, indigenuous and imported, passionately proclaim it. The premature and too confident triumph of those who “seek after wisdom” over Christianity, and the timid conservatism of those to whom the kingdom of God is more in word than in power, alike bespeak its approach. But a surer sign is the hopefulness which possesses those who, whether in years so or not, are young in heart, and which impels them to lay hold of every help

that time brings for the nurture of the spiritual life within them ; for disencumbering their faith of the traditional beliefs which have weighed upon it so heavily ; for manifesting their knowledge and love of the truth in the clearest and completest manner ; and for expressing it in such a way as to lead both themselves and others onwards to a more full and satisfactory experience of all that is given to man in Jesus Christ.

It is scarcely needful to say, that we heartily sympathize with them that thus strive and hope. And if what we have already said does not justify us, we make our appeal to those who hold by the past, in preference to the present or the coming aspects of the gospel. The most resolute in orthodoxy do not shape Christian truth into the same doctrines that they did whose names they use as watchwords ; and if they employ the same terms, the explanations they give of their meaning are vastly different. Father Newman, in his "Essay on Development," has gone far beyond the canons and decrees of the Romish Church ; and the evangelical views of Mr. Gorham are not those of the Puritan divines whose ground he professes to maintain. Nor is it possible for them to do otherwise. The world has moved on during these last three hundred years ; and it is with mankind as it is with individuals, who proceed from the first crude imaginings of childhood to the maturer, though still imperfect, opinions which besee men of riper years ; the cheerful docility of infancy is all that can or ought to be preserved. It would be as wise to insist that the Bible should never be printed, because it was originally preserved by writing alone ; or that it should not be translated into modern languages, because first of all composed in Hebrew and Greek ; as that the

truths learned from it should never be expressed in other than the ancient forms. The Church of Rome itself, in allowing the printing of modern translations, has admitted what is, in effect, sufficient to overthrow her claim of infallibility in the embodiment of Christian truth in her creeds of former ages.

“The worst enemies of the truth are those that oppose themselves to these changes ; and they attempt impossibilities. Men must for ever up and on ; and if hindered in attaining new and wider apprehensions and manifestations of truth, will attain new and fatal apprehensions and manifestations of falsehood ; all the more fatal because mistaken for truth. The complaints uttered against the restlessness and mobility of young and active minds are really of no weight or value. If such minds move not, which will ? It was so at the Reformation, when one of the favourite declamations against the Reformers was grounded on the youth of their adherents. Nay, it was so when the gospel was first preached amongst men. Every morbid stupidity that is ridiculed or condemned in these, is a reflection on the wisdom and faithfulness of their elders. The part the elders should have taken was that of preparing for the change, and guiding, and even leading on to it. Or, supposing that so much as this was impossible, and that settled and habitual modes of looking at the great things concerned could not be so altered or modified as to lead to such labours ; at least there should have been so much knowledge as to allow them to see, that what has proved in every way suitable and sufficient for themselves, must not of necessity be suitable and sufficient for others belonging to a later and more advanced age. And when they complain that these aspirants condemn

them retrospectively, they should not forget their own unfairest judgment, which has condemned beforehand that which is sought from the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" hidden in Jesus Christ. ✓ There is a grand word in Locke's "Journal," which they who ponder the characteristics of these times would do well to keep in mind:—"It is a duty we owe to God, as the fountain and author of all truth, who is truth itself; and it is a duty also we owe our own selves, if we will deal candidly and sincerely with other souls, to have our minds constantly disposed to entertain and receive truth wheresoever we meet with it, or under whatever appearance of plain or ordinary, strange, new, or perhaps displeasing, it may come in our way." This thought we commend to those of whom we speak, and address ourselves to the task before us.

We call the attention of our readers to the works of our distinguished philosopher and poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for the purpose of recommending the study of his writings to those who are desirous of obtaining a sure standing-place, whence they may look upon the religious controversies that are now proceeding, and discern whither they are tending; and whence, too, they may set forth, with some assurance of success, in the arduous and noble endeavour after genuine Christian life and knowledge. This recommendation we wish especially to impress upon our younger readers, remembering how this study furnished to ourselves the means of gaining such a confidence in the gospel, that not only were we placed out of the reach of the old objections to it, but forefended also from the misery of feeling ourselves beset with difficulties unknown before, which we could not dispose of, and which would have

left us no alternative but to renounce what we heartily believed, or to hold by it in contradiction to the clearest conclusions of our understanding. Many beside ourselves ascribe to Coleridge such service as this ; and most surely, at no time was it needed as at the present, when the truth is assailed with weapons, apparently from her own armoury, and by men whom we might well believe to be willing to die for her sake ; and when she is defended in a manner that leaves us little ground for expecting her ultimate triumph, save the eternal life which she possesses as the offspring of God.

But we must narrow our field, for it would be too large a task on this occasion to show the bearing of our author's principles upon all the theological questions which are now under discussion ; and the position taken by him in respect of one at least, the connexion of the Church with the State, is such, that though Dissenters might find more in it than Churchmen to approve, they cannot agree with him respecting it. We shall confine our remarks, therefore, to the relation of Philosophy to Theology, which will include the Method, or *Organon*, of theological inquiry, and the relation of Theology to Religion ; excluding specific notice of the sources of theological knowledge, of the doctrines of theology, and of all which is associated with ecclesiastical matters. And we shall adopt this course, because in these subjects are involved most of the points of the greatest moment, respecting which definite and available principles need now to be obtained. Something we must say of the questions themselves first, and then we shall endeavour to show what aid Coleridge can afford to an honest and intelligent inquirer.

The question of the relation of Philosophy to Theology appears to us to be the primary one of our day, and, indeed, of every day ; for according to the conclusion arrived at upon it, almost every other question is answered ; and it is one upon which shallow and most unsafe opinions may be easily formed, and such as shall seem to be incontrovertible whilst they are utterly baseless. It must be remembered that this is a subject of a purely scientific character, for theology is truly a science, inasmuch as it is knowledge reduced to method and organic order, although that knowledge is of such a kind that the system constructed, in every case, must be in no small degree individual. A Christian man alone can apply scientific method to that knowledge which is the material of theology, for he alone possesses it ; but any man of philosophical insight and education can teach the scientific method by which a theology can be formed, since it is only the method common to all sciences. Excepting those good simple souls, who mean nothing but the service of truth, though they often do it great disservice, who are not sufficiently cultivated to avoid the confusion of theology with religion, of the science with the knowledge which it methodizes ; the relation of philosophy to religion is denied only by such as will allow no philosophy to be true but their own, and by those who, not knowing exactly what their philosophy is, fear that, if they admit such a relation generally, their theology will not be able to stand its ground. And yet it is evident that, as a man's philosophy is, so must his theology be ; that is, a Christian man must needs "interpret" (as Lord Bacon says) the facts of his religious life by the help of those views and principles, whatever they may be, that form his philo-

sophy. We do not speak of theologies taken at second-hand from the works of professed divines, which may, or may not, represent a man's own knowledge, but of that which, however defective or erroneous, he has consciously, or it may be even unconsciously, framed for himself, and which he has by him, not like a book upon a shelf, but like a thought in his mind, part of his very self. It cannot be doubted that a disciple of the school of Locke would construct a wonderfully different system of theology from one of the school of Hegel; and the outcry against the study of German philosophy, so common and so loud now in some quarters, is an acknowledgment of this fact. What is needed is the clear perception of the necessity of this relation; and that whatever system of theology any one may have formed, it necessarily involves the philosophical principles of its constructor, and without them could not have been. And when this is perceived, it will be seen of what moment it is that our philosophy should not ignore any of the great facts of human consciousness; nor grovel and maunder about sensations or suggestions, as if in them all the secret of the universe was hidden, while the lofty themes of spiritual knowledge, and freedom and truth, invite its attention and research in vain.

Systems of philosophy are for philosophers, but their influence spreads far and wide beyond this select band. As years roll on, the thoughts which sprang into being in the mind of the solitary thinker, nay, the very terms in which he embodied them, become the common property and market-language of human-kind. The philosophy of Hobbes, expounded by Locke and Paley, until very lately, when an opposite system began to

make its influence felt, has given a peculiar character to the entire English mind, both here and in the New World; and Cooper could make his famous Leatherstocking speak of his *ideas*, in a way that would have horrified both Plato and Aristotle, although it was with the exact signification assigned to the word by the sensational school. No attentive student of the history of the great French Revolution can fail to discern in it the influence of the same philosophy, as it was expounded by Condillac. And now, both in the United States and in our own country, the thoughts and the terms which Kant, first of all in these later times, gave currency to, are beginning to show themselves in a similar manner. And it is thus that the philosophical spirit of an age is formed; and this, just as with the individual, determines the character of the theological systems that prevail. An illustration in proof, of a very remarkable character, is afforded us by the history of doctrines during the last two hundred years. The forms of belief that truly represented the religious life and knowledge of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by degrees ceased to hold that relationship, and grew to be mere forms, animated by no living faith. During the hundred years that followed the Puritan Revolution, the philosophy which Locke taught spread in England, and, as a necessary consequence, appeared that cold and dreary Unitarianism which overran this country at the commencement of the last century. And then Whitefield and Wesley arose, and summoned back some spirit of life into the old doctrines, rekindling the piety which had almost expired with their fervent breath; but they were both men of their own age alone, and in neither dwelt the power which could

shape, or bring on, the coming age ; they held by the doctrines of the Reformation and the philosophy of Locke, welding, but not fusing, them into one by their mighty zeal. It could not but result from this that, when years had passed, and men of lesser mark in inward devoutness entered upon their labours, and knowledge and arts had imparted their impulse to the world, the life should shrink from out the old forms again, and men should anxiously look about them for new forms by which to shield and nourish their faith. But now a new spirit of philosophy had arisen, not such as grew out of the teaching of Locke, a spiritual philosophy ; and we see to-day in Germany, in America, and in our own land, a species of Pantheism eagerly announced as the theology of the age, just as when, a hundred years ago, a new theology was needed, and a sensational philosophy prevailed, Unitarianism was embraced as the system most accordant with such life as the times could boast. This illustration reveals much of the relation of Theology to Religion also, as will appear when we have spoken of that question ; and in both respects it is full of most concerning instruction for teachers at the present time.

Theology being a science, it not only follows that it should be affected by every change in philosophy, in the manner we have noted, but also, as every science is, by the extension of human knowledge generally ; questions continually rising respecting what was formerly received without hesitation, and much that was considered to be indissolubly connected with it being removed to other departments of science, and investigated and classified by means of their laws. And this, which at first awakens the liveliest alarm and hostility,

is afterwards discovered to be right; as has been the case with astronomy, and geology, and metaphysics, which, by the Schoolmen, and by others of later date than they, were included in the domain of this "Queen of the Sciences." But especially is Theology affected by every advance towards what Bacon designates *philosophia prima*; which in our days is called *method*. Aristotelian Logic was, and by a few still is, considered the legitimate *organon* of inquiry; but as theological science, like every other, is based upon facts, and ought to be cultivated so as to bear the soundest and most abundant fruitage, (to employ Bacon's metaphor,) and this method can neither discover, nor invent, nor apply, but only develop and prove; though it were faultless, it must be as inadequate to explain the facts, and to direct the practice that should be grounded on them, in this science, as it is by all men known to be in physics; and the employment of it must be as unwise. The splendid *organon* of Lord Bacon, cleared of the obscurities which his own imperfect apprehension and incomplete treatment of it have occasioned, and corrected and rendered applicable by the aid of more recent labourers in the same wealthy field—this, by which every science that now adorns and blesses human life has been constructed, must be resorted to; and then Theology, which has hitherto produced little beside darkness and strife in all our ways, shall fill her proper sphere, and, through her, Philosophy shall (as her great teacher prayed) bestow "a largess of new alms upon the family of mankind."

The relation of Theology to Religion ranks only next in interest, at the present time, to the former question, and outstrips it in importance. Perhaps the

reason for the common denial of any relation of Philosophy to Theology arises from the circumstance that the latter is so frequently confounded with Religion. Now it is of the utmost moment that the distinction between them should be seen ; and it is so obvious that, when seen, it appears most wonderful that it should ever have been necessary to point it out. We have already, in effect, done so ; but we repeat it that we may show how the confusion has arisen, and also more clearly exhibit the true relation of the one to the other. Religion, in such phrases as “the Christian religion,” has a signification near akin to Theology, being a little wider, as it includes the outward observances of devotion, &c. ; and in those communities in which visible profession and observance are valued for their own sake, as in the Church of Rome, it signifies those observances, and nothing more ; but when so used, there is a tacit assumption that there is nothing else to be so entitled—that in these things the whole relation of man to God is fulfilled. We know, however, that these are of the smallest possible value in the fulfilment of that relation ; and that it is by the allegiance and love of the heart spontaneously and truthfully rendered to God, by the aspiration after such oneness of spirit and will with him as may realize the being a child of God, that man takes his proper place in his sight ; and to this aspiration and confidence and love we give the name Religion.† Constituted as man is, such a spiritual state cannot exist without being shared, according to its capability, by the intellect ; for religion is the self-devotion of the whole man to God ; and hence it arises that he is not only able, but constrained, to construct a systematic representation of the knowledge and expe-

rience which lead to, and follow from, this self-devotion; and such a representation is Theology. Religion, thus, is the material, Philosophy supplies the form and method, and the science Theology is the result; in it Philosophy and Religion are wedded. But this is not the whole of the relation of which we now speak. All human science, worthy of the name, not only methodizes what is already known by man, but also furnishes him with the means of making new acquisitions in knowledge, and especially directs him in the practical application of it; theological science must needs have this scope, as a science; and it has, moreover, from its peculiar character—its facts being those of the inner life—a most powerful influence in keeping that life at the level it represents, and of producing harmony and consistency in its various manifestations and modes of activity. Herein lies the unspeakable worth, or the deadly danger, of Theology. If it do not embrace all the phenomena or facts of a man's religion, what is left out is in great danger of being overlooked, and the life of becoming, in consequence, unsymmetrical and imperfect. If it do not give to any of these facts its proper rank; if it exalt what is subordinate, and depress what ought to have pre-eminence; there is the danger that, in the life, thenceforward, the same inversion should be displayed. If it do not aim at practice, there is the danger that, practically, religion should be divorced from the life, and become a mere speculation, or, worse still, a fanaticism, powerful only for evil. Such are the consequences, on the one hand, of the relation of Theology to Religion; those, on the other, are the harmonious culture, and constant advancement, and progressive development, of all that enters into this

spiritual and inward life, accompanied by such manifestations of it, not only in devotional observances, but in all that makes up man's life in time, as shall attest its character and source, and give to it a higher completeness, and fit the subject of it in ever loftier services here to help forward the accomplishment of God's great purpose respecting the world, as a "living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men."

These are the questions respecting which we purpose to exhibit the kind of assistance that all who desire to become acquainted with matters of such infinite concern as are agitated now, and to find a means of safety and defence in these times of conflict and peril, and especially beginners in theological inquiry, may find in the writings of Coleridge. . Our efforts have been directed simply to setting them, as questions, before our readers ; for our space and our scope alike forbade any attempt to discuss them ; and we have so treated of them as, if possible, to awaken reflection respecting them, and thus to lead away the thought from the subjects of lighter moment, to these, upon which if true conclusions are reached, there will be little difficulty, comparatively, in attaining the truth respecting the others. They have, in fact, been already proposed in Mr. Morell's "Philosophy of Religion ;" but will, we fear, have to be repeatedly urged upon both teachers and learners, and brought forward in various forms, before they receive the attention they deserve ; and by this consideration, as well as by those we have mentioned before, we have been moved in our selection of them for our present purpose.

It is not our intention on this occasion to speak of the Biography of Coleridge, rich though it is with

profound and varied instruction. Nor shall we regard him in his "many-sidedness," but simply as a Philosopher and a Theologian. Neither can we stay to notice all that has been or can be said to his disadvantage. Much of it is irrelevant. The charge of plagiarism, one of the most vexatious attacks upon his name, has been well met, in the later editions of his works, by a minute and careful reference of all that even seems to be borrowed to the primary sources; the editor has shown her appreciation of the original wealth of her father's mind, by thus acknowledging the full amount of what he appears to be indebted to others for; and we think that this accusation is effectually silenced. And much cancels itself, being self-destructive. Thus, if a party in the Church of England holds him to be the guilty source of John Sterling's "infidelity," others, whose opinions are quite as weighty, regard him as the "father of the Puseyites." The fact respecting his writings is, that he declares great truths and principles with sufficient boldness and clearness, but often fails completely in his deductions from them, and in his applications of them; as Bacon himself has failed in the practical illustration of his *novum organon*; and so it has fallen out, that men of most opposite schools and creeds, dwelling on the conclusions, and overlooking the principles; or on the truths, and overlooking the deductions from them; have claimed him as belonging to them. This we hold to be one excellence of his works for the purpose we have in view; which is not to enforce ready-made opinions, but to discipline the mind so that it may be able to form them for itself.

For the same reason we consider it to be a great advantage that Coleridge does not in any of his works

formally expound a system either of philosophy or of theology. That he had such systems every attentive reader of his writings can perceive, but the whole habit of his mind forbade his undertaking the task of "the practical architect, by whose skill a temple of faith, or a school for wisdom, should be reared." He is rather, as a transatlantic writer has said of him, "an inspired poet, an enthusiastic prophet of a spiritual philosophy;" or, more truly, treasures both of wisdom and faith lie dispersed through his books, like the wealth of nature in mine and mountain, in forest and plain, seemingly without plan or order, yet all really placed by the operation of secret laws of most exquisite order, which reveal themselves only to the earnest student. We shall not attempt to develop his systems, for we do not recommend him as a master whose *ipse dixit* is to put an end to all controversy, and whose modes of thought are to be implicitly received and followed; but as a teacher of the art of reflection, whose ability is all the greater from this seeming desultoriness.

One other remark we feel bound to make—but a few years back it was quite customary, even amongst thinking men, to speak of Coleridge's metaphysics as deep and mysterious, as being, in their sense of the word, "transcendental;" but a total change has passed over this subject, and now what was so high and unearthly as to be deemed fit only for cloud-land, is pronounced elementary, and fit for mere learners only. The truth, as ever, lies between these extremes; not *elementary*, as his present critics use the term, his philosophy most assuredly is; but at the same time not dark and mysterious, and verging upon the inane. And yet the men who have been most ready in the outset

of their studies to acknowledge their obligations to his works, when they have gained a deeper and wider acquaintance with their great themes, have wondered a little that they should ever think of them, as they well remember that they did. For Coleridge, as we have said, teaches no system, not even his own, and hence he cannot be such a constant companion, nor, for so long a time, the guide of those who are aiming at the loftiest heights of wisdom, as if he had done so, and driven his readers' minds along his own line of reflection, instead of inspiring them with the will and the power to construct and to move along lines of their own. All that he has written may, in short, be regarded as *propaedeutick* to the larger study of philosophy and theology, and as such alone we recommend it now.

By way of confirming the opinions we have expressed respecting the value of Coleridge's works, we refer our readers to the "Preliminary Essay," which is contained in the second volume of the "Aids to Reflection," written by the late Mr. James Marsh, President of the University of Vermont, in the United States; and subjoin the opinions of two other philosophical writers of the same country, which we happen to have lying before us. Kaufman, in the preface to his translation of Bockshammer's "Treatise on the Will," says,—"Coleridge's writings afford the best introduction to the study of German philosophy. He had much of the German spirit, and often employs German terms. Yet he was by no means bound to the Germans; for instead of translating their works, or retailing their speculations, he drew his thoughts from the depths and fulness of his own exhaustless mind." And Ripley,

in his "Introductory Notice" of Victor Cousin's writings, observes, that the works of our author are "exceedingly valuable to two classes of persons: to those on whom the light of spiritual truth is beginning to dawn, who are just awakened to the consciousness of the inward power of their nature, and who need to have the sentiment of religion quickened into more vital activity; and to those who have obtained, as the fruit of their own reflections, a living system of spiritual faith. The former will find the elements of congenial truth profusely scattered over his pages; and the latter may construct out of their own experience a systematic whole with the massive fragments that are almost buried beneath the magnificent confusion of his style. But he cannot satisfy the mind whose primary want is philosophical clearness and precision." The grateful dedication and preface prefixed by Archdeacon Hare to his "Mission of the Comforter," will be fresh in our readers' memories, and may stand as the representative of the feelings with which his name is cherished by those in his own country who have proved themselves the best able to appreciate his worth.

We shall confine our extracts, as far as possible, to the illustration of the two questions we have stated, but we must premise that we cannot always strictly do so. And we shall endeavour to prevent any passage from losing its force by appearing as a mere fragment; though, in general, no precaution of this kind will be required: his best work, as we esteem it, the "Aids to Reflection," from which we shall borrow most largely, being wholly of a fragmentary character; and his most thoroughly compacted writings consisting of series of essays, the connexion of which appears at times rather

arbitrary. Much in these extracts, and in his philosophical and theological works, may not seem to throw any light directly on the matters now most eagerly controverted; yet we know, from experience, that the principles and elements of truth to be learned from them, and the habits of thought cultivated by them, can and will lead to the discovery of what does most satisfactorily illuminate the darkest of these questions. It ought also to be mentioned, that very many of his thoughts have passed into general circulation, and, therefore, not all even of what we quote must be expected to wear an air of novelty.

The "Aids to Reflection" consists of a copious selection of passages from English theological writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and principally from Leighton, with comments, and so arranged as "to establish the distinct characters of prudence, morality, and religion;" "to substantiate and set forth at large the momentous distinction between reason and understanding;" and with this framework to afford, what Mr. Marsh designates, "a philosophical statement and vindication of the distinctively spiritual and peculiar doctrines of the Christian system." It would have been more satisfactory, had our space permitted it, to have shown how, in the principles laid down in this work, a safeguard from the errors of our day may be found, and a reply to the most prodigious of its false assertions. We are obliged, however, to restrict our employment of it to quotations, which can only show the kind of assistance in reflection it can afford; and perhaps, also, which is of more moment, how, practically, philosophy subserves the great interests of religion through its bearing on theology. The difference be-

tween "reason" and "understanding," of which Coleridge says—"Not only is it innocent in its possible influences on the religious character, but it is an indispensable preliminary to the removal of the most formidable obstacles to an intelligent belief of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, of the characteristic articles of the Christian faith, with which the advocates of the truth in Christ have to contend, the evil heart of unbelief alone excepted" (*Aids*, vol. i. p. 196)—this difference, which will appear clearly enough in some passages, must be borne in mind in reading them all, or the author's meaning will not appear.

We will begin with the distinction between Philosophy and Religion, which is so much kept out of sight, and so often overlooked, by writers and readers of the present day.

"Christianity alone both teaches the way, and provides the means, of fulfilling the obscure promises of this great instinct [of the natural relation of the heart to God] for all men, which the philosophy of boldest pretensions confined to the sacred few."—*Aids*, vol. i. p. 97.

"Herein the Bible differs from all the books of Greek philosophy, and in a twofold manner. It doth not affirm a Divine nature only, but a God: and not a God only, but the living God."—*Statesm. Man.* p. 233.

The following passage will conduct us from this distinction to the relation between them:—

"By undeceiving, enlarging, and informing the intellect, Philosophy sought to purify and to elevate the moral character. Of course, those alone could receive the latter and incomparably greater benefit, who by natural capacity and favourable contingencies of fortune were fit recipients of

the former. How small the number we scarcely need the evidence of history to assure us. Across the night of Paganism Philosophy flitted on, like the lantern-fly of the tropics, a light to itself, and an ornament, but, alas! no more than an ornament, of the surrounding darkness.

“Christianity reversed the order. By means accessible to all, by inducements operative on all, and by convictions, the grounds and materials of which all men might find in themselves, her first step was to cleanse the heart. But the benefit did not stop here. In preventing the rank vapours that steam up from the corrupt heart, Christianity restores the intellect likewise to its natural clearness. By relieving the mind from the distractions and importunities of the unruly passions, she improves the quality of the understanding; while at the same time she presents for its contemplation objects so great and so bright as cannot but enlarge the organ by which they are contemplated. The fears, the hopes, the remembrances, the anticipations, the inward and outward experience, the belief and the faith, of a Christian, form of themselves a philosophy and a sum of knowledge, which a life spent in the Grove of Academus, or the Painted Porch, could not have attained or collected. The result is contained in the fact of a wide and still widening Christendom.

“Yet I dare not say that the effects have been proportionate to the Divine wisdom of the scheme. Too soon did the doctors of the church forget that the heart, the moral nature, was the beginning and the end; and that truth, knowledge, and insight, were comprehended in its expansion. This was the true and first apostacy—when in council and synod the divine humanities of the gospel gave way to speculative systems, and religion became a science of shadows under the name of theology, or at best a bare skeleton of truth, without life or interest, alike inaccessible and unintelligible to the majority of Christians. For these therefore there remained only rites, and ceremonies, and spectacles, shows, and semblances. Thus among the learned *the*

substance of things hoped for passed off into notions ; and for the unlearned the surfaces of things became substance. The Christian world was for centuries divided into the many that did not think at all, and the few who did nothing but think ;—both alike unreflecting, the one from defect of the act, the other from the absence of an object.” —*Aids*, vol. i. pp. 146, 147.

This, from the “Notes on the Pilgrim’s Progress,” embodies Coleridge’s view of the influence of Philosophy on Religion, through Theology :—

“If by metaphysics we mean those truths of the pure reason which always transcend, and not seldom appear to contradict, the understanding ; or (in the words of the great apostle) spiritual verities which can only be spiritually discerned—and this is the true and legitimate meaning of *metaphysics* ; then I affirm that this very controversy between the Arminians and the Calvinists, in which both are partially right in what they affirm, and both wholly wrong in what they deny, is a proof that without metaphysics there can be no light of faith.”—*Lit. Rem.* vol. iii. p. 403.

Elsewhere he says :—

“A hunger-bitten and idea-less philosophy naturally produces a starveling and comfortless religion.”—*Statesm. Man.* p. 230.

And—

“To the immense majority of men, even in civilized countries, speculative philosophy has ever been, and must ever remain, a *terra incognita*. Yet it is not the less true, that all the epoch-forming revolutions of the Christian world, the revolutions of religion, and with them the civil, social, and domestic habits of the nations concerned, have

coincided with the rise and fall of metaphysical systems.”—*Ib.* p. 215.

In another remark he touches a deeper point in the relation between the subjects of which we speak:—

“The same principle, which in its application to the whole of our being becomes religion, considered speculatively, is the basis of metaphysical science; that, namely, which requires an evidence beyond that of sensible concretes.”—*Friend*, vol. iii. pp. 97, 98.

And thus he states the scope of his writings:—

“This has been my object, and this alone can be my defence, the unquenched desire, not without the consciousness of having earnestly endeavoured to kindle young minds, and to guard them against the temptations of scorers, by showing that the scheme of Christianity, though not discoverable by human reason, is yet in accordance with it; that link follows link by necessary consequence; that Religion passes out of the ken of Reason only where the eye of Reason has reached its own horizon; and that Faith is then but its continuation: even as the day softens away into the sweet twilight; and twilight, hushed and breathless, steals into the darkness.”—*Biog. Lit.* vol. ii. pp. 308, 309.

But we may spare our readers some embarrassment, by giving the following eloquent passage, in which the most distinctive characteristics of Coleridge’s philosophy are clearly indicated:—

✓ “God created man in his own image. To be the image of his own eternity created he man! Of eternity and self-existence what other likeness is possible, but immortality and moral self-determination? In addition to sensation, percep-

tion, and practical judgment—instinctive or acquirable—concerning the notices furnished by the organs of perception, all which, in kind at least, the dog possesses in common with his master; in addition to these, God gave us reason, and with reason he gave us reflective self-consciousness; gave us principles, distinguished from the maxims and generalizations of outward experience by their absolute and essential universality and necessity; and, above all, by superadding to reason the mysterious faculty of free-will and consequent personal amenability, he gave us conscience—that law of conscience, which in the power, and as the indwelling word, of a holy and omnipotent legislator, commands us, from among the numerous ideas, mathematical and philosophical, which the reason, by the necessity of its own excellence, creates for itself—unconditionally commands us to attribute reality and actual existence to those ideas, and to those only, without which the conscience itself would be baseless and contradictory, to the ideas of soul, of free-will, of immortality, and of God. To God, as the reality of the conscience, and the source of all obligation; to free-will, as the power of the human being to maintain its obedience which God, through the conscience, has commanded, against all the might of nature; and to the immortality of the soul, as a state in which the weal and woe of man shall be proportioned to his moral worth. With this faith all nature,

————— all the mighty world
Of eye and ear—————

presents itself to us, now as the aggregated material of duty, and now as a vision of the Most High, revealing to us the mode, the time, and particular instance, of applying and realizing that universal rule pre-established in the heart of our reason.”—*Friend*, vol. i. pp. 146—148.

And this, which is of a more strictly scientific tone:—

“The spirit of man, or the spiritual part of our being, is the intelligent will; or (to speak less abstractly) it is the capability with which the Father of spirits hath endowed man, of being determined to action by the ultimate ends which the reason alone can present. The understanding, which derives all its materials from the senses, can dictate purposes only; that is, such ends as are in their turn means to other ends. The ultimate ends, by which the will is to be determined, and by which alone the will, not corrupted, *the spirit made perfect*, would be determined, are called, in relation to the reason, moral ideas. Such are the ideas of the eternal, the good, the true, the holy, the idea of God as the absoluteness and reality (or real ground) of all these, or as the Supreme Spirit in which all these substantially are, and are one; lastly, the idea of the responsible will itself—of duty, of guilt, or evil in itself without reference to its outward and separable consequences.”—*Ch. and State*, pp. 133, 134.

In the following extracts the student will find material for thought, not merely respecting the general relations of Philosophy to Theology and Religion, but specifically respecting the *method* he should pursue in his investigation. How these views are connected with, and spring from, a spiritual philosophy, will appear, if the passage quoted last but one be attentively re-perused.

Our author, in his discussion of the doctrine of election, says:—

“The following may, I think, be taken as a safe and useful rule in religious inquiries. Ideas, that derive their origin and substance from the moral being, and to the reception of which as true objectively, (that is, as corresponding to a reality out of the human mind,) we are determined by a practical interest exclusively, may not, like theoretical posi-

tions, be pressed onward into all their logical consequences. The law of conscience, and not the canons of discursive reasoning, must decide in such cases ; at least, the latter have no validity which the single *veto* of the former is not sufficient to nullify. The most pious conclusion is here the most legitimate.

“It is too seldom considered, though most worthy of consideration, how far those ideas or theories of pure speculation, which bear the same name with the objects of religious faith, are indeed the same. Out of the principles necessarily presumed in all discursive thinking, and which being in the first place universal, and secondly, antecedent to every particular exercise of the understanding, are therefore referred to the reason,—the human mind (wherever its powers are sufficiently developed, and its attention strongly directed to speculative or theoretical inquiries) forms certain essences, to which, for its own purposes, it gives a sort of notional subsistence.”—*Aids*, vol. i. pp. 124, 125.

After various illustrations of the need of watchfulness against the danger pointed out in the last paragraph, Coleridge re-states his view of the part to be taken by human reason, for the purpose of providing “a safety-lamp for religious inquirers.”

“This,” he says, “I find in the principle, that all revealed truths are to be judged of by us, so far only as they are possible subjects of human conception, or grounds of practice, or in some way connected with our moral and spiritual interests. In order to have a reason for forming a judgment on any given article, we must be sure that we possess a reason by, and according to which, such a judgment may be formed. Now in respect of all truths to which a real independent existence is assigned, and which yet are not contained in, or to be imagined under, any form of space

or time, it is strictly demonstrable that the human reason, considered abstractly as the source of positive science and theoretical insight, is not such a reason. At the utmost, it has only a negative voice. In other words, nothing can be allowed as true for the human mind which directly contradicts this reason. But even here, before we admit the existence of any such contradiction, we must be careful to ascertain that there is no equivocation in play, that two different subjects are not confounded under one and the same word. . . . But if not the abstract or speculative reason, and yet a reason there must be in order to a rational * belief, then it must be the practical reason of man, comprehending the will, the conscience, the moral being, with its inseparable interests and affections; that reason, namely, which is the organ of wisdom, and, as far as man is concerned, the source of living and actual truths.”—*Id.* pp. 132, 133.

Illustrations of the position, that every doctrine is to be interpreted in reference to those who know, or might know it, follow; and the essay concludes thus:—

“Do I then utterly exclude the speculative reason from theology? No. It is its office and rightful privilege to determine on the negative truth of whatever we are required to believe. The doctrine must not contradict any universal principle, for this would be a doctrine that contradicted itself. Or philosophy? No. It may be, and has been the servant and pioneer of faith, by convincing the mind that a

* We append one of the earliest aphorisms in the “Aids to Reflection,” to prevent any mistake respecting Coleridge’s use of this word. “The word *rational* has been strangely abused of late times. This must not, however, disincline us to the weighty consideration, that thoughtfulness, and a desire to bottom all our convictions on grounds of right reason, are inseparable from the character of a Christian.”—*Aph.* xvi. p. 9.

doctrine is cogitable, that the soul can present the idea to itself, and that, if we determine to contemplate, or think of, the subject at all, so, and in no other form, can this be effected. So far are both logic and philosophy to be received and trusted. But the duty, and in some cases, and for some persons, even the right, of thinking on subjects beyond the bounds of sensible experience, the ground of real truth, the life, the substance, the hope, the love, in one word, the faith; these are derivatives from the practical, moral, and spiritual nature and being of man.”—*Ib.* p. 142.

Amongst the “Notes on Leighton,” not contained in the “Aids to Reflection,” is one upon the consequences logically deducible from his Calvinistic doctrines, and which are so frequently regarded as conclusive against the reception of those doctrines. In it some of the thoughts we have seen in the preceding passages are thus expressed:—

—“The consequences appear to me, in point of logic, legitimately concluded from the terms of the premises. What shall we say then? Where lies the fault? In the original doctrines expressed in the premises? God forbid. In the particular deductions, logically considered? But these we have found legitimate. Where then? I answer, in deducing any consequences by such a process, and according to such rules. The rules are alien and inapplicable; the process presumptuous, yea, preposterous. The error lies in the false assumption of a logical deducibility at all in this instance. First, because the terms from which the conclusion must be drawn are accommodations, and not scientific. . . . Secondly, because the truths in question are transcendent, and have their evidence, if any, in the ideas themselves, and for the reason; and do not, and cannot, derive it from the conceptions of the understanding, which cannot comprehend the truths, but is to be com-

prehended in and by them. Lastly, and chiefly, because these truths, as they do not originate in the intellective faculty of man, so neither are they addressed primarily to our intellect, but are substantiated for us by their correspondence to the wants, cravings, and interests of the moral being, for which they were given, and without which they would be devoid of all meaning. The only conclusions, therefore, that can be drawn from them, must be such as are implied in the origin and purpose of their revelation; and the legitimacy of all conclusions must be tried by their consistency with those moral interests, those spiritual necessities, which are the proper final cause of the truths, and of our faith therein. For some of the faithful these truths have, I doubt not, an evidence of reason; but for the whole household of faith their certainty is in their working.”—*Lit. Rem.* vol. iv. pp. 158, 159.

For the development of the method by which Coleridge would construct his theology, we must refer the reader to his “Essay on the Science of Method,” which was written as the general introduction to the “Encyclopædia Metropolitana,” and is republished as a separate volume, in the edition of that costly work now in progress; or to the third volume of the “Friend,” in which most of the matter of that essay will be found, with other illustrations and applications. Of it we can only say, that he preceded Whewell in the representation of the Baconian system of induction, which forms the groundwork of that author’s “Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences.”

In the last extract may be discerned Coleridge’s view of the evidences of Christianity; and on this subject, which is so intimately connected with his philosophy, and is of such moment in its relation to existing controversies, we must insert a few passages which will

indicate the position he took up. Here is one, which expresses a fear that has, in fact, been realized, though not exactly in the way which the writer expected.

“I more than fear the prevailing taste for books of natural theology, physico-theology, demonstrations of God from nature, evidences of Christianity, and the like. Evidences of Christianity! I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the want of it; rouse him, if you can, to the self-knowledge of his need of it; and you may safely trust it to its own evidence—remembering only the express declaration of Christ himself, *No man cometh to me unless the Father leadeth him*. Whatever more is desirable—I speak now with reference to Christians generally, and not to professed students of theology—may, in my judgment, be far more safely and profitably taught, without controversy or the supposition of infidel antagonists, in the form of ecclesiastical history.”—*Aids*, vol. i. pp. 333, 334.

Speaking of some who exalted what they called “the religion of nature,” because free from mystery; and who argued that the mysteries of Christianity were sufficient to disprove its claims upon the hearts of men, he says:—

“I would disturb no man’s faith in the great articles of the (falsely so called) religion of nature. But before a man rejects, and calls on other men to reject, the revelations of the Gospel and the religion of all Christendom, I would have him place himself in the state and under all the privations of a Simonides, when in the fortieth day of his meditation the sage and philosophic poet abandoned the problem in despair. . . . Yes! in prevention (for there is little chance, I fear, of a cure) of the pugnacious dogmatism of partial reflection, I would prescribe to every man who feels a commencing alienation from the Catholic faith, and whose studies and attainments authorize him to argue on

the subject at all, a patient and thoughtful perusal of the arguments and representations which Bayle supposes to have passed through the mind of Simonides. Or I should be satisfied if I could induce these eschewers of mystery to give a patient, manly, and impartial perusal to the single treatise of Pomponatius *De Fato*. When they have fairly and satisfactorily overthrown the objections, and cleared away the difficulties urged by this sharp-witted Italian against the doctrines which they profess to retain, then let them commence their attack on those which they reject. As far as the supposed irrationality of the latter is the ground of argument, I am much deceived if, on reviewing their forces, they would not find the ranks woefully thinned by the success of their own fire in the preceding engagement—unless, indeed, by pure heat of controversy, and to storm the lines of their antagonists, they can bring to life again the arguments which they had themselves killed off in the defence of their own positions.”—*Ib.* pp. 187, 188.

The following statement occurs amongst the “Literary Remains,” and was communicated by the friend to whom Coleridge dictated it. It is entitled “*Evidences of Christianity*,” and the illustration it affords of the light cast by such a philosophy as that held by our author, on these questions, entitles it to a place here; as well as its intrinsic value in reference to the subjects of which it treats.

“I. Miracles—as precluding the contrary evidence of no miracles.

“II. The material of Christianity, its existence and history.

“III. The doctrines of Christianity, and the correspondence of human nature to those doctrines,—illustrated, 1st, historically, —2nd, individually—from its appeal for its truth to an asserted fact,—which, whether it be real or

not, every man possessing reason has an equal power of ascertaining within himself;—namely, a will which has more or less lost its freedom, though not the consciousness that it ought to be, and may become, free;—the conviction that this cannot be achieved without the operation of a principle connatural with itself;—the evident rationality of an entire confidence in that principle being the condition and means of its operation;—the experience in his own nature of the truth of the process described by Scripture as far as he can place himself within the process, aided by the confident assurances of others as to the effects experienced by them, and which he is striving to arrive at. All these form a practical Christian. Add, however, a gradual opening out of the intellect to more and more clear perceptions of the strict coincidence of the doctrines of Christianity, with the truths evolved by the mind, from reflections on its own nature. To such a man one main test of the objectivity, the entity, the objective truth of his faith, is its accompaniment by an increase of insight into the moral beauty and necessity of the process which it comprises, and the dependence of that proof on the causes asserted. Believe, and if thy belief be right, that insight which gradually transmutes faith into knowledge will be the reward of that belief. . . . 3rd, In the above I include the increasing discoveries in the correspondence of the history, the doctrines, and the promises of Christianity, with the past, present, and probable future of human nature; and in this state a fair comparison of the religion as a Divine philosophy, with all other religions which have pretended to revelations, and all other systems of philosophy; both with regard to the totality of its truth and its identification with the manifest march of affairs.

“I should conclude that, if we suppose a man to have convinced himself that not only the doctrines of Christianity, which may be conceived independently of history or time, as the Trinity, spiritual influences, &c., are coincident with the truths which his reason, thus strengthened,

has evolved from its own sources; but that the historical dogmas, namely, of the incarnation of the creative Logos, and his becoming a personal agent, are themselves founded in philosophical necessity; then it seems irrational, that such a man should reject the belief of the actual appearance of a religion strictly correspondent therewith, at a given time recorded, even as much as that he should reject Cæsar's account of his wars in Gaul, after he has convinced himself *a priori* of their probability. As the result of these convictions, he will not scruple to receive the particular miracles recorded, inasmuch as it would be miraculous that an incarnated God should not work what must to mere men appear as miracles; inasmuch as it is strictly accordant with the ends and benevolent nature of such a Being, to commence the elevation of man above his mere senses by attracting and enforcing attention, first through an appeal to those senses. But with equal reason will he expect that no other or greater force should be laid on these miracles as such; that they should not be spoken of as good in themselves, much less as the adequate and ultimate proof of that religion; and likewise he will receive additional satisfaction, should he find these miracles so wrought, and on such occasions, as to give them a personal value as symbols of important truths when their miraculousness was no longer needful or efficacious." *Misc. Pieces*, with *Conf. Inq. Sp.* pp. 186—190; or *Lit. Rem.* vol. i. pp. 386—389.

The whole is admirably summed up in these few words :—

“The truth revealed through Christ has its evidence in itself, and the proof of its Divine authority in its fitness to our nature and needs; the clearness and cogency of this proof being proportionate to the degree of self-knowledge in each individual hearer. Christianity has likewise its historical evidences, and these as strong as is compatible

with the nature of history, and with the aims and objects of a religious dispensation. And to all these Christianity itself, as an existing power in the world, and Christendom as an existing fact, with the no less evident fact of a progressive expansion, give a force of moral demonstration that almost supersedes particuilar testimony." *Conf. Inq. Sp.* p. 63.

After the aphorism containing the "tenets peculiar to Christianity," Coleridge supposes the questions, "How can I comprehend this? How is this to be proved?" to be asked, and replies in this manner:—

"To the first question I answer: Christianity is not a theory, or a speculation, but a life; not a philosophy of life, but a life and a living proecess. To the second, TRY IT. It has been eighteen hundred years in existence, and has one individual left a record like the following?—'I tried it, and it did not answer.' . . . Have you, in your own experience, met with any one in whose words you could place full confidence, and who has seriously affirmed, 'I have given Christianity a fair trial. . . . Yet my assurance of its truth has received no increase. Its promises have not been fulfilled, and I repent of my delusion?' If neither your own experience, nor the history of almost two thousand years, has presented a single testimony to this purport; and if you have heard and read of many who have lived and died bearing witness to the contrary; and if you have yourself met with some one, in whom on any other point you would place unqualified trust, who has on his own experience made report to you that he is faithful who promised, and what he promised he has proved himself able to perform; is it bigotry, if I fear that the unbelief which prejudices and prevents the experiment, has its source elsewhere than in the uncorrupted judgment—that not the

strong free mind, but the enslaved will, is the true original infidel in this instance?"—*Aids*, vol. i. pp. 157, 158.

Between this and our next quotation is the essay on "The Difference in Kind between Reason and Understanding," which, to such as are unacquainted with the fundamental proposition of the new and spiritual philosophy, is as good an introduction to it as may be found, and is not wholly without value to others. The following occurs in the "Reflections," by which the aphorism and its comment, discussing the doctrine of "Original Sin," are introduced:—

"The practical inquirer hath already placed his foot on the rock, if he have satisfied himself that whoever needs not a Redeemer is more than human. Remove from him the difficulties and objections that oppose or perplex his belief of a crucified Saviour; convince him of the reality of sin, which is impossible without a knowledge of its true nature and inevitable consequences; and then satisfy him as to the fact historically, and as to the truth spiritually, of a redemption therefrom by Christ; do this for him, and there is little fear that he will permit either logical quirks or metaphysical puzzles to contravene the plain dictate of his common sense, that the sinless one who redeemed mankind from sin must have been more than man, and that He who brought light and immortality into the world could not, in his own nature, have been an inheritor of death and darkness. It is morally impossible that a man with these convictions should suffer the objection of incomprehensibility, and this on a subject of faith, to overbalance the manifest absurdity and contradiction in the notion of a Mediator between God and the human race, at the same infinite distance from God as the race for whom he mediates."—*Ib.* pp. 201, 202.

This passage has an immediate bearing upon some of the most thorny and fruitless speculations which now occasion such distress to those who would fain be firmly grounded in the truth. How many would have been kept from wandering in the trackless desert of doubt, where the only hope is a mirage, and the sand-storms ever threaten to overwhelm, had they received such guidance as it can afford, at the time when they first discovered that the broad, beaten path they had pursued could not lead them to the goal they desired ! And how many fatal mistakes would have been prevented, had every earnest inquirer been directed at the outset of his career by such a view of Christianity as is contained in the following paragraph !—

“ Christianity is fact no less than truth. It is spiritual, yet so as to be historical ; and between these two poles there must likewise be a mid-point, in which the historical and spiritual meet. Christianity must have its history—a history of itself, and likewise the history of its introduction, its spread, and its outward becoming ; and, as the mid-point above-mentioned, a portion of these facts must be miraculous, that is, *phenomena* in nature that are beyond nature. Furthermore, the history of all historical nations must in some sense be its history ;—in other words, all history must be providential, and this a providence, a preparation, and a looking forward to Christ.”—*Conf. Inq. Sp.* p. 7.

The essays on “ Original Sin ” and “ Redemption,” in the “ Aids to Reflection,” are too long for quotation, and we could not do them justice, either by abstracts or extracts. We can only point them out, and particularly the latter, to our readers, as deserving most careful study, and as calculated, not merely to correct, but

still more cogently to preclude the possibility of such bewildering errors as we know not a few in these times, with the very best intentions of discovering and holding only the truth, to have fallen into. One aphorism only we will append to this paragraph, as a specimen of the way in which this philosophy expresses itself on a question of practical Religion. And respecting these essays, and, indeed, respecting Coleridge's theological writings generally, the fact that he, who was intimately familiar with the philosophy whence the objections that are now deemed most weighty have arisen, and with the divines of the best ages of our English school; and who, moreover, though a Churchman, was by no means enslaved to the prejudices of the Church,—for he did not shrink from the investigation of the most daring speculations respecting the faith, and he spoke with honest admiration of Cromwell and Bunyan, and with as honest reprobation of Charles and Laud,—the fact that Coleridge treats with such reverence, and avows with such heartiness his belief in, the truths that are now so pertinaciously impugned, ought to influence the feelings, though not the judgment, of any who are devoutly seeking a well-founded assurance respecting the Gospel of Christ.

“Stedfast by faith. This is absolutely necessary for resistance to the evil principle. There is no standing out without some firm ground to stand on: and this faith alone supplies. By faith in the love of Christ the power of God becomes ours. When the soul is beleaguered by enemies, weakness on the walls, treachery at the gates, and corruption in the citadel, then by faith she says—Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world! Thou art my

strength! I look to Thee for deliverance!—And thus she overcomes. The pollution (*miasma*) of sin is precipitated by his blood, the power of sin is conquered by his Spirit. The apostle says not—stedfast by your own resolutions and purposes; but—*stedfast by faith*. Nor yet stedfast in your will, but stedfast in the *faith*. We are not to be looking to, or brooding over, ourselves, either for accusation or for confidence, or (by a deep yet too frequent self-delusion) to obtain the latter by making a merit to ourselves of the former. But we are to look to Christ and *him crucified*. The law *that is very nigh to thee, even in thy heart*: the law that condemneth and hath no promise; that stoppeth the guilty past in its swift flight, and maketh it disown its name; the law will accuse thee enough. Linger not in the justice-court listening to thy indictment. Loiter not in waiting to hear the sentence. No, anticipate the verdict. Appeal to Cæsar. Haste to the king for a pardon. Struggle thitherward, though in fetters; and cry aloud, and collect the whole remaining strength of thy will in the outcry—*I believe; Lord, help my unbelief!* Disclaim all right of property in thy fetters. Say that they belong to the old man, and that thou dost but carry them to the grave, to be buried with their owner! Fix thy thought on what Christ did, what Christ suffered, what Christ is—as if thou wouldst fill the hollowness of thy soul with Christ. If he emptied himself of glory to become sin for thy salvation, must not thou be emptied of thy sinful self to become righteousness in and through his agony and the effective merits of his cross? By what other means, in what other form, is it possible for thee to stand in the presence of the Holy One? With what mind wouldst thou come before God, if not with the mind of Him, in whom alone God loveth the world? With good advice, perhaps, and a little assistance, thou wouldst rather cleanse and patch up a mind of thy own, and offer it as thy admission-right, thy qualification, to Him who *charged his angels with folly!* Oh! take counsel with

thy reason. It will show thee how impossible it is that even a world should merit the love of eternal wisdom and all-sufficing beatitude, otherwise than as it is contained in that all-perfect Idea, in which the Supreme Spirit contemplateth himself and the plenitude of his infinity—the Only-Begotten before all ages, *the beloved Son, in whom the Father is indeed well pleased!*

“And as the mind, so the body with which it is to be clothed; as the indweller, so the house in which it is to be the abiding-place. There is but one wedding-garment, in which we can sit down at the marriage-feast of heaven; and that is the Bridegroom’s own gift, when he gave himself for us, that we might live to him and he in us. There is but one robe of righteousness, even the spiritual body, formed by the assimilative power of faith, for whoever eateth the flesh of the Son of man, and drinketh his blood. Did Christ come from heaven, did the Son of God leave the glory *which he had with his Father before the world began*, only to show us a way to life, to teach truths, to tell us of a resurrection? Or saith he not, *I am the way—I am the truth—I am the resurrection and the life?*”—*Aids*, vol. i. pp. 250—255.

We have not thought it needful to say a word in vindication of any proposition, either in Philosophy or Theology, which we have quoted, or which we know Coleridge to have laid down, for we have not recommended him as any other than a teacher of the art of thinking to good purpose on the great themes which he discusses; and any introduction of polemical disquisition would have detracted from the force of that recommendation. It will be an augury of the highest hope and promise, that men shall be able to do as Locke counselled in the passage from his *Journal* we have given above; and shall thankfully welcome, and

diligently use, help from any hand in their arduous quest of truth ; but suffer no hand, under the pretext of giving help, to lay fetters upon their souls, or to stop them in their high undertaking.

One of the characteristic features of our days appears to be this,—that the discussion of religious, or rather of theological questions, is so much in the hands of non-professional men. Coleridge was not a cleric. The audacious assumptions of authority were revived in the Anglican Church by a “layman ;” and they who have broached the most audacious denials in the name of reason, have been unconnected with any ministry. We do not undervalue a *theological* training ; but we are deeply persuaded that both Theology and Religion have suffered from the *professional* cast of the minds that have hitherto been most forward in teaching and vindicating them. The world is so much larger than the cloistered student wots of, and the interests of everyday life are so varied, and far-reaching, and complicated, that it is no wonder if truths, in themselves the most momentous, and which ought of all to be the most universally influential, when treated of by such as know nothing of these common human affairs, should seem to be mere impertinences, and come to be regarded as having no relation whatever to the engagements that claim the greatest part both of the time and the thoughts of practical men. That non-professional minds should be engaged upon these subjects, is surely a hopeful sign. The impulse given to physical and moral studies by the *educated common sense* of those who have joined in the pursuit of them ; and the stagnant and chaotic condition of the two great branches of knowledge,

which, having been ranked with theology as “professions,” have not shared this impulse—medicine and law—alike declare to us the vast benefits which may be expected, in the end, from these voluntary labours, and one cause, at least, of the present condition of the noblest of all sciences. Many a year may come and go before all we long to see accomplished will be brought to pass; but not bating “a jot of heart or hope,” we will watch for and hail every token that the time draws near, and strive, as now, to enlist the hearts and minds of those who best can aid, in such services as must effectually hasten the advent of the reign of God’s truth alone amongst men.

THE END.

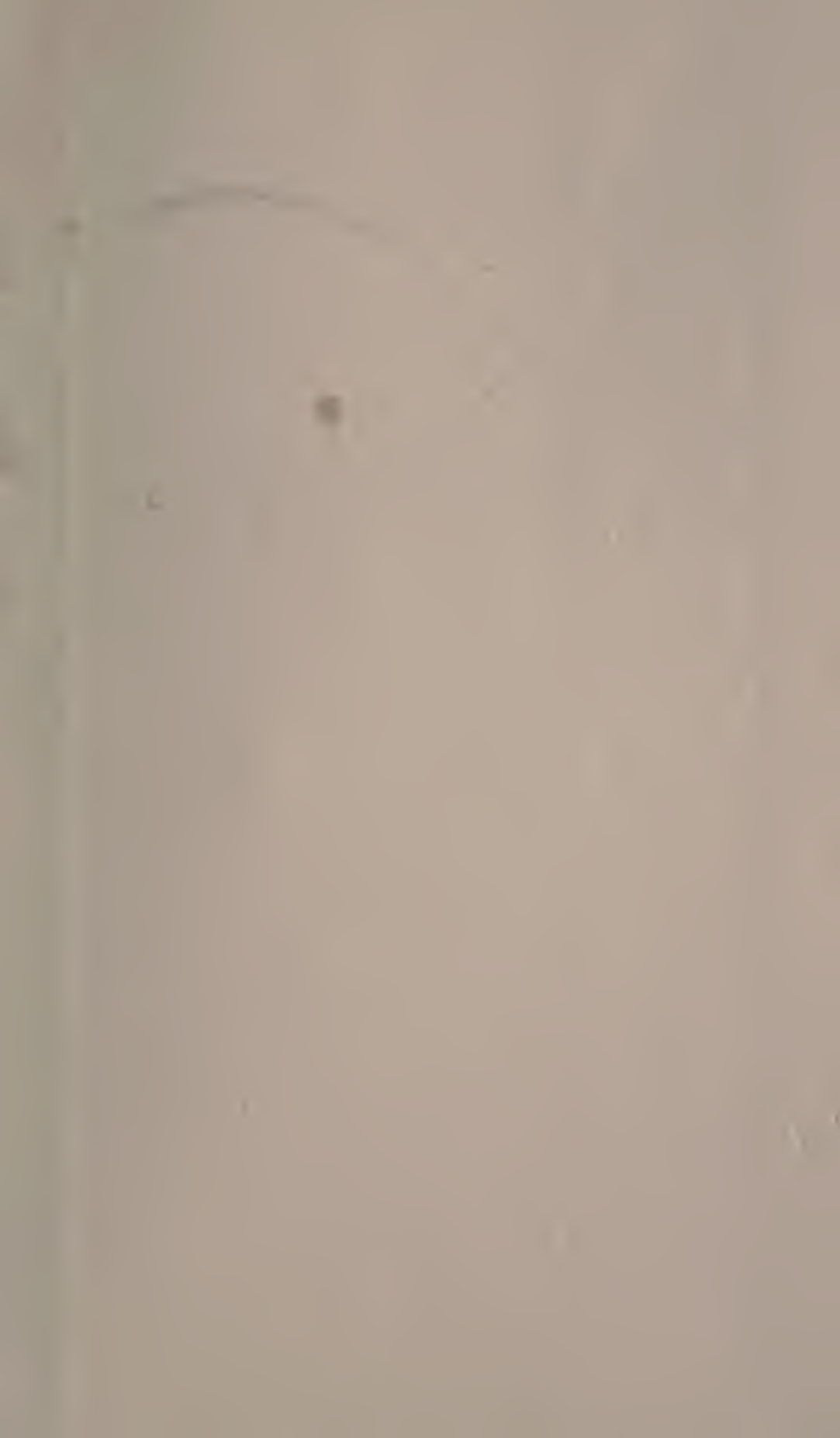
JOHN CHILDS AND SON, BUNGAY.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: August 2004

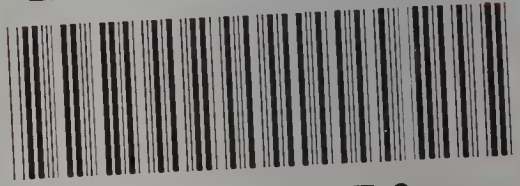
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